Instructor: Dr. Susan Cohen
Office: 2-161 Wilson
Office hours: W 10:00 – 11:30 AM or by appointment.
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Goals of the course:
1) to examine human perspectives of time, world order, reward/punishment, and the human and divine role and/or responsibility for creating and maintaining these concepts.
2) to engage in critical reading and analysis of materials to gain additional knowledge of theoretical and methodological approaches to the academic study of religion
3) to undertake collaborative and independent work that involves research and the use of primary and secondary sources, that will result in the production of group and final projects focused on the critical analysis of religious thought and perspectives in a secular setting.

Required texts:
Baumgartner, R.

Bernstein, A.

Cohn, N.

Pagels, E.

Perdue, L.

Wright, J.E.

Other readings to be handed out in class or posted on D2L.

Course requirements: 
- attendance/participation/assignments 20%
- group presentation 30%
- final project presentation 20%
- final paper/project 30%

Each student will be required to participate in one group project and in-class presentation. Dates of each presentation will be organized during the first week of class.

The final project and presentation must draw on each student’s “methodology” background as part of the requirements for the major in religious studies.
Course Policies:

1) This is a course about religion and the development of religious thought, and the interaction between religion, human society, and the categories assigned to groups within society. This is NOT a class that teaches religious doctrine or that is taught from a religious perspective. We will be examining the development of social and religious categories and the ways in which this perceptions function in society in an academic and secular setting, and all religions, religious beliefs, and religious interpretations of events, texts, and politics will therefore be open to questioning, examination, interpretation, criticism, and discussion. An open mind and a willingness to examine new ideas and new methods regarding the history of religions and the development of religious traditions are essential. This class is not a forum for expressions of personal theology.

2) Plagiarism – the presentation of others’ work as your own – is an offense punishable by expulsion. All work submitted in this class must be your own, and all references to ideas from books, articles, or other sources must be cited correctly. If you do not know how to properly reference your work, or you are in doubt whether or not you should cite material, refer to the Student Academic and Conduct Guidelines, or make an appointment to see the instructor to discuss the problem. Anyone found guilty of plagiarism, cheating, forgery, falsification or any other form of academic dishonesty will fail this course and the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students.

Course Schedule:

Week One:
Jan. 9: Introduction and organization of assignments/presentation schedule, etc.

Week Two:
Jan. 16: Wisdom: worldview, justice, and retribution
   Read: Perdue, chapters 1-2, 6-7.
         Bible, Proverbs, Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon

Week Three:
Jan. 23: Wisdom: breakdown of justice and retribution
   Read: Perdue, chapters 3 and 5.
         Bible, Job, Ecclesiastes.

Week Four:
Jan. 30: Theodicy: evil, reward and punishment
   Read: Pagels, chapters 1-4
         Bible, Tobit, Mark and/or Matthew

Week Five:
Feb. 6: Theodicy: spiritual and personified evil, group presentation and discussion
   Read: Pagels, chapters 5-6
         Russell, Devil readings, D2L.

Week Six:
Feb. 13: Times, part 1: apocalypse, heaven and hell
   Read: Perdue, chapter 8
         Bernstein, part 2
         Wright, chapter 5
         Cohn, chapter 9.
Bible, Daniel, Zechariah

**Week Seven:**
Feb. 20: Times, part 1: apocalypse, heaven and hell, group presentation and discussion
   Read: Bernstein, part 3
   Wright, chapters 6 and 8
   Cohn, chapter 10.
   Enoch 1, D2L

**Week Eight:**
Feb. 27: Times, part 2: millennialism
   Read: Bernstein, part 4
   Cohn, chapters 11-12
   Baumgartner, pp. 1-130.
   Bible, Revelation

**Week Nine:**
March 6: Times, part 2: millennialism, group presentation and discussion
   Read: Baumgartner, pp. 130-end
   Gorenberg, History of the Future, D2L.

**March 11-16 Spring Break**

**Week Ten:**
March 20: Times and Cosmologies: millenialism and violence
   Read: Juergensmeyer, Cosmic War, D2L
   Gorenberg, The Day After the Last, D2L.
   Additional readings TBA, on D2L.

**Week Eleven:**
March 27: Individual meetings for final project.

**Week Twelve:**
April 3: Times and Cosmologies
   Read/Watch: films and readings to be assigned.
   Assignment due in class.

**Week Thirteen:**
April 10: Final project presentations

**Week Fourteen:**
April 17: Final project presentations

**Week Fifteen:**
April 24: **FINAL PAPER/PROJECT DUE**